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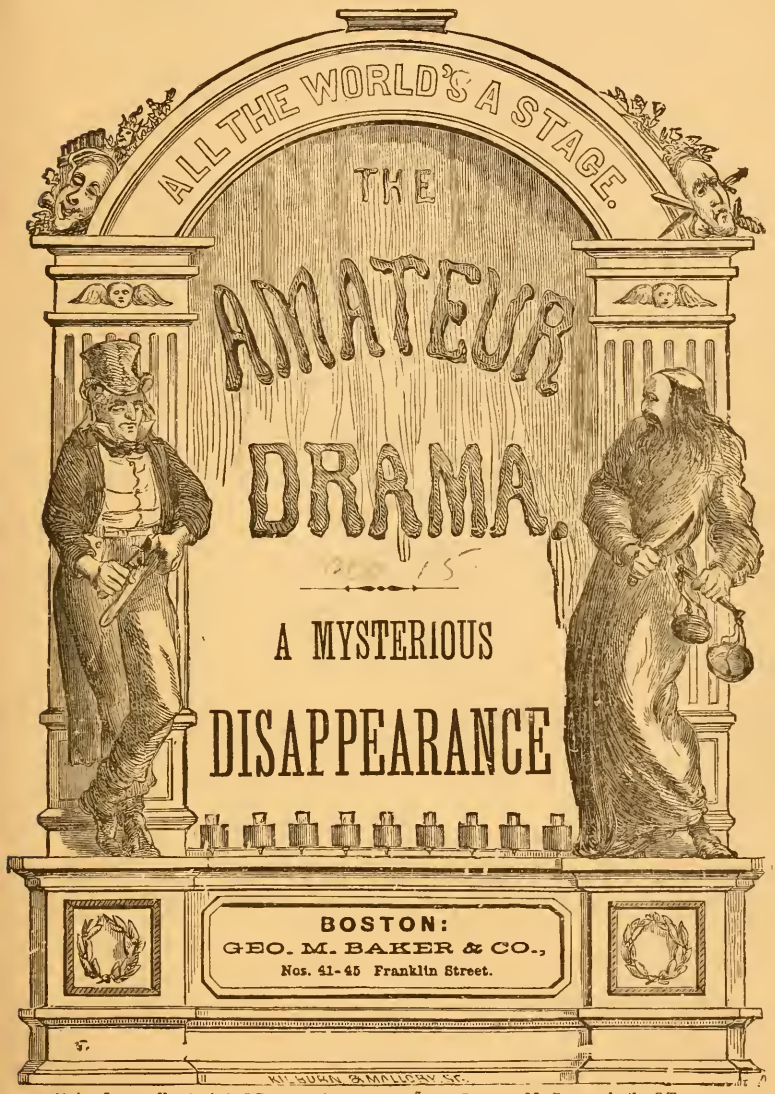

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A MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE.

A FARCE.

CHARACTERS.

CAPTAIN BOLIVER BOBSTAY, "Mysteriously disappeared."
CHARLES CLEVERLY, an Amateur Farmer.
DIXON DOLBY, out for a Day's Sport.
CARLOS CARROTS, a Farm Hand.
MRS. CLEVERLY, Charles's Wife.
NELLY CLEVERLY, Charles's Sister.
MISS PERSIS GRIEVOUS, "Widow Bobstay."

COSTUMES.

CAPTAIN. Wide-bottomed trousers, and "Reefer" of blue; blue shirt; black handkerchief; bald wig for own; black wig and big black whiskers for disguise.

DOLBY. Checkered suit; gaiters; Jockey cap.

CHARLES. Blue flannel suit; wide-brimmed straw hat.

CARLOS. Wide straw hat; heavy shoes; blue stockings; short pants; and jacket open; with red or yellow waistcoat; red wig.

NELLY. Pretty muslin dress, with apron and morning cap.

MRS. C. Morning dress.

MISS PERSIS. Red wig, with long curls. Dress very high-colored; spectacles of a light blue; hat. She is rather old, with affected girlish dress and ways.

SCENE. — *Sitting-room in farm-house. Door in flat* C. *Window in flat* L. *Lounge under window. Table* L. *corner, back, with cover, books, and flowers. Small table,* R. C. *Arm-chair,* L. C. *Chair,* L., *near first entrance. Door* R. *and* L. NELLY *discovered dusting.*

Nelly (*throwing brush on lounge*). That will do for to-day. It's time Carlos were back from the post-office. I am anxious to obtain a letter from my invisible adorer, Dixon Dolby. How my good brother would open his eyes if he knew the extent of my wickedness. Three months ago, six of us girls at school, desirous of acquiring proficiency in correspondence, agreed to write to gentlemen whom we had never met, but whom we knew by reputation to be gentlemen. My choice was my brother's chum before his marriage, Dixon Dolby. My plan succeeded admirably. He answered the note signed, Rosa Bean. The most tender and impassioned epistles followed on both sides, until at last he had the impudence to request an exchange of photographs. I consented, but was not fool enough to allow him to discover my identity; so, to secure his, I sent instead a photograph of my brother's wife. I knew they had never met, but they must; and when they do, won't there be fun. I only hope I shall be at the *denouement.* Ah! here's Carlos.

(*Enter* CARLOS, C., *with two letters and a paper.*) Well, Carlos, what success?

Carlos (*putting letters behind him*). Hey? What'll

you give to know? Ought to give a feller somethin' purty sweet, cos I ran all the way.

Nelly. Indeed I will, Carlos. My warmest thanks and my sweetest smile.

Carlos. Is that all? Well, here's a letter (*gives her a letter*).

Nelly. O, thank you, Carlos. You're a dear, good boy (*takes letter, and sits in arm-chair*, L.).

Carlos (*comes down* R., *puts newspaper on table*). Kinder thought I might get somethin' sweeter; a kiss, perhaps. But I s'pose she was afraid somebody might be lookin'. I wouldn't a cared if they had. She's jest as purty as a pictur; and I kinder think she hankers arter me. I jest like her, you bet! Wish sometimes I could be a caterpillar, and crawl under her purty feet. I couldn't be more smashed than I am now. Wal, I'll go and hunt up Mr. Cleverly with the other letter (*goes up* C.). Nothin' wantin', Miss Nelly?

Nelly. Nothing; thank you, Carlos.

Carlos (*at door*). O, she's a beauty. Takes such pains to call me Carlos. Mr. Cleverly he always calls me Careless, 'cause he says it's my natur. [*Exit* C.

Nelly (*takes photograph from letter*). There he is; charming fellow. He has no idea I am the sister of his best friend. Not bad-looking (*holds photograph up*).

(*Enter* MRS. CLEVERLY *with hat and shawl, door* L.

She looks over NELLY'S *shoulder at picture.*)

A girl might be happy with such a man. I've no doubt I shall blush when we meet. (*To photograph.*) You dear fellow, you are good-looking and smart —

Mrs. C. Indeed he is, Nelly.

Nelly (*jumping up*). O, good gracious! you here?

Mrs. C. Have I disturbed your devotions? Who is he? When will it be?

Nelly (*puts photograph in her bosom*). Nonsense; it's only a slight acquaintance.

Mrs. C. You do not slight his picture. I should say he was a bosom-friend. Where's Charley?

Nelly. Out on the farm, hilling corn, I believe.

Mrs. C. Poor fellow! how his corns must ache! and his back. Ha, ha, ha! He works so hard to make a pleasure of what he does not enjoy. Nell, tell him, if he comes in, I've run over to Mrs. Young's to borrow her pat. I won't be gone long. [*Exit* C.

Nelly. She saw him, but she doesn't know him. If she only knew what he received in exchange. Well, I'm not going to spoil a frolic for fear of the consequences.

Charles (*outside*). Hang the corn, Careless; my back 's nearly broken now.

(*Enter* C. *with a hoe, followed by* CARLOS.)

Carlos. How about the onions, sir?

Charles. How about them as much as you like, but no hoe about them for me.

Carlos. They won't be worth a cent.

Charles. Well, don't get sentimental over them, Careless. They're not worth weeping over; no, Careless. I've set myself up for an independent farmer, and there's no clause regarding hoeing in my declaration of independence. You shall have a holiday: you needn't work to-day. You're not very fond of it at any time; but this day we have a visitor.

Nelly. A visitor?

Charles. Yes, Nelly. I've got word from him; he's coming down for a day's sport. The very man I've picked out to lead you to the hymeneal altar.

Carlos. Gosh all hemlock!

Charles. What's the matter, Careless?

Carlos. Me — I — nothin'; only a darned skeeter up my nose.

Nelly. Picked out for me? Thank you; I can do my own picking.

Charles. And your own leading too. You're smart enough to do the leading business. Where's Jenny, "the girl I left behind me"?

Nelly. She left before you — came in. She ran over to Mrs. Young's to borrow her pat.

Charles. Her Pat? Haven't I told her I wouldn't have an Irishman on the place?

Nelly. Ha, ha, ha! It's a butter pat.

Carlos. Ho, ho, ho!

Charles. What's the matter with you, Careless? (*Carlos looks sober.*) Do that again, and you'll get anything but a pat. Go, make yourself presentable; put your auburn locks in curl-papers, and wash your face. You shall guide my friend in his day's sport.

Carlos. Yes, sir. (*Aside*) He's going to lead her with a halter, is he? I'll show him sport. [*Exit* C.

Charles. Yes, Nelly, we're to have a visit from my old chum, Dixie Dolby.

Nelly. Good gracious! he coming here?

Charles. Yes; for the first time; and to the country for the first time, too. This little matrimonial scheme of mine is the only secret I ever had from him.

He didn't know I was courting Jenny Bobstay until he received my wedding-cards. Wasn't he surprised? No more than I, however. Just a year ago, that highly respectable old mariner, Captain Boliver Bobstay, mysteriously disappeared from Valparaiso, where the stanch bark "Indigo Blue" was waiting for a cargo. His coat and hat were found upon the pier; but the wearer never did appear upon that pier again.

Nelly. And he was not heard of again?

Charles. No. Yes. Six months ago, Jenny received a deed of this place from Uncle Bobstay. How it came, or where it came from, nobody knew; but it was found all right, and being a nice cosy place here, we married and settled upon it three months ago.

Nelly. But, Charley, your friend —

Charles. O, yes; Dolby — clever fellow. You've never met him, Nelly?

Nelly. No. I've often heard you speak of him, and feel inclined to like him.

Charles. I know you will, Nelly. Now let's have something nice for dinner, in honor of our guest; something extra, you know.

Nelly. I'll look after the dinner. When he comes, we shall have something *extra.* [*Exit*, R.

Charles. She's a nice girl. I hope Dixie will like her. To think of his coming down here to see me a married man. Why, I should almost as soon expect Uncle Bobstay to walk in at my door.

(*Enter* C. BOBSTAY. *He has a black wig and black whiskers.*)

Bobstay (*at door*). Avast there! Are the decks clear? Sh—

Charles. Hallo! Who have we here? Come in.

Bobstay (*comes down* R.). All right, my hearty. When a messmate's going down in the briny — for the last time, mind — what do we do? Why, we extends a helping hand, and grabs him by the hair of the head, don't we?

Charles. That is the first impulse—unless he's bald.

Bobstay (*extending hand*). Put it there; give us your flipper (*they shake hands*). All right. Here's your hand and 'ere's my head! Take a good hold of it, as if I was agoin' down for the last time. Now, steady. (CHARLES *takes hold of his wig, and* BOBSTAY *seizes his beard.*) Let fall all! (*He stands back, pulling off whiskers.* CHARLES *pulls off wig.*)

Charles. Uncle Bobstay!

Bobstay. Hush! Easy, Charley, easy. Bobstay of the Indigo Blue, he went up — no, down — leastwise he went off. I'm a sperit, you understand? I'm the Ancient Mariner — Captain Kyd — the Great Unknown — anything you please but Bobstay. He mysteriously disappeared; let him be missed.

Charles. But what have you been doing? What's the trouble?

Bobstay. A deep one—deeper than the sea. Hush! Put it there (*shakes hands*). There's a woman at the bottom.

Charles. At the bottom of the sea? Good gracious!

Bobstay. No. I wish she was, Charley. Put it there (*shakes hands*). You've heard me speak of Spanker, skipper of the Venetian Red?

Charles. Many a time. He was a particular friend of yours, I believe.

Bobstay. Charley, listen to a tale that would make the marines blush. When I reached Valparaiso on my last run, I found the Venetian Red there before me; but I found that Spanker had "mysteriously disappeared."* His hat and coat were found upon the pier, and he was supposed to be beneath the waves.

Charles. What a coincidence!

Bobstay. Charley, he left a widow. I found her in Venetian Red on board the mourning black, — no — in mourning red on board the Venetian —

Charles. No matter about the colors; go on.

Bobstay. Charley, she was in distress; and did you ever hear of a tar who found a lass in distress, and deserted her? Never. In a week I had asked her to marry me. In ten days we were married in church.

Charles. Married! Then you are —

Bobstay. Mysteriously disappeared; that's the p'int. We were married in church. And now for an astonishing disclosure. When we came out of church, who should I see but Spanker — the dead and gone Spanker — peeping round a corner, with a grin on his face, and a finger on his nose.

Charles. What! Why, this is bigamy!

Bobstay. What-amy? 'Twas a swindle!

Charles. Unhappy man! How did you act? What did you say?

Bobstay. I said nothing; put the lady, Mrs. Spanker Bobstay, into the carriage, shut the door, and mysteriously disappeared.

* A wink and finger on side of nose when these words are used through the play.

Charles. And your wife?

Bobstay. Avast there! She's Spanker's wife.

Charles. But he basely deserted her.

Bobstay. So did I. Mysteriously disappeared.

Charles. But where have you been? What have you been doing all this time?

Bobstay. Pursuing the phantom ship, Sylvester Spanker.

Charles. Have you any trace of him?

Bobstay. Trace, my hearty? He's made a clean run, blast his toplights!

Charles. Then she is yours now.

Bobstay. Is she? That's a p'int for the sharks to argue. I didn't marry his widow; I couldn't marry his wife; and yet I'm a married man.

Charles. But you love her, captain?

Bobstay. Ease off a bit. If Spanker mysteriously disappeared, there's reason for Spanker's disappearance. And as the aforesaid widow, when I married her, who didn't prove to be a widow after I married her, boxed my ears twice afore the ceremony, the p'ints of my matrimonial compass don't p'int that way much.

Charles. But where is she?

Bobstay. In chase of another craft, my boy. Close-reefed, to overhaul a young spark, with a view to engage him. Shall I destroy his happiness? That's a p'int. Shall I appear like a spectre and forbid the banns? That's another p'int. No, my boy. I'll set down here; keep under water till she's fairly hooked.

Charles. But suppose Spanker should turn up?

Bobstay. That's a p'int we can't argue. Mum's the

word. I'm a spirit. Bobstay 's gone up. Keep dark. Not a word to your wife now.

Charles. But Jenny don't know you are here!

Bobstay. No? I'll hide in the barn — in the pig-sty — anywhere until the widow 's hooked.

(*Enter* CARLOS, C. *from* L.)

Carlos. Say, Mr. Cleverly, here's a woman wants to see you. [*Exit* C. *to* R.

Bobstay. A woman? Then I'll get under hatches (*runs to table* R. C. *and puts on wig and whiskers*). That used to be my state-room. I'll look it over. Mind, Charley, mum's the word. I'm a spirit; mysteriously disappeared. You understand? [*Exit door* R.

Charles. But I say, captain! — He's pitched into Nelly's room. No matter. I'll have him out as soon as I've finished with my visitor. Who can she be?

(*Enter* C., MISS PERSIS GRIEVOUS, *tragically.*)

Persis, C. You are Mr. Charles Cleverly?

Charles. At your service, madam.

Persis. Monster! Traitor! Arch conspirator!

Charles. Madam!

Persis. You are the friend of Dixon Dolby. My Dixie. You have enticed him from my loving presence; from me, the woman who adores him; for what?

Charles. A day's sport, he says.

Persis. Sport! You are like the wicked boy, and I the innocent frog. What's sport to you is death to me. Last night he told me of his proposed visit. This morning I found in his room beneath his pillow — for we both lodge beneath the same roof; and I, in his absence, enter his sanctum as a privileged guest of

that dear and worthy Mrs. Sprygs, who lets rooms at five dollars per week, lights included —

Charles (*aside*). For particulars, see small bills.

Persis. — Beneath the pillow, which his ambrosial locks had pressed, I found this note, and this picture (*shows photograph*). Do you recognize it?

Charles (*looks at photograph*). Good heavens! My wife!

Persis. Your wife? Then you, like me, are a victim. I blush for my anger. Let us in each other's arms mingle our tears (*approaching* CHARLES *with arms extended*).

Charles (*backing to* R.). Not just yet. Explain this, and at once.

Persis. Does it need explanation? Here is the picture, and here the note signed Rosa Bean. A clandestine correspondence. I see it all, at once. Under the pretext of a day's sport, he comes here to make love to your wife.

Charles. The confounded scoundrel!

Persis. Speak gently of the erring. I love him. Yes, spite his faults, I love him still. I am here to save him — to save you. I am a succoring angel.

Charles. Give me that note (*takes note*). Not my wife's handwriting; evidently disguised. O, Jenny, Jenny, have I lost you?

Persis. O, Dixie, Dixie, have I lost you?

Dolby (*outside*). Hallo! Charley, old boy, where are you?

Persis. His voice. How it thr-r-r-ills me! But he must not see me here. Where can I hide? (*Goes to*

door L.) In this room? Get him away, and I will return. Then we can make plans to circumvent them.

[*Exit door* L.

Charles. But, madam, that's my wife's room. She's gone. Can I be awake? My Jenny corresponding with my friend! And he in love? O, it's absurd!

(DOLBY *appears at door with a fishing-rod in case, a gun, and a scoop-net with handle, clumsily held in his arms; a game-bag swung one side, and a fishing-basket the other.*)

Dolby. Ah, there you are, Charley. And here I am, armed and equipped as the law directs. (*Attempts to enter; gun gets across the doorway. Backs and tries again; net gets across the doorway. Business repeated.*) Well, well, this is getting interesting (*enters*). Ah! here we are (*drops everything on floor, and runs to* CHARLES, *hands extended*). How are you, old fellow? Alive and kicking? Domestic bliss and rural felicity? Happy chap!

Charles (*shakes hands*). Glad to see you, Dixie. Welcome.

Dolby. That's hearty. Where's your wife? Must see her, you know. I came to enjoy the beauties of the country, and you've the brightest and loveliest. I know you know — of course you know.

Charles (*aside*). He knows, confound him! (*Aloud*) She's out just now. You shall see her.

Dolby. Now let's see — what shall we do first? There's fishing, hunting, and making love to a pretty girl. I've only a day, and we must crowd lots of fun into ten hours.

Charles. Well, what say you to lunch first?

Dolby. Nothing for me, save a glass of warm milk from the hands of a dairymaid. I've come down here to breathe the country air. Stop a moment. I forgot that (*runs up to door* C. *and stands breathing hard, and striking his breast*). Ah, that's the sort; the invigorating air of the country. Ah! (*with a long breath*) there's the first dose.

(*Enter* NELLY, R. DOLBY *comes down* L.)

Charles. And here's the dairymaid. My sister, Dixie. Mr. Dixon Dolby, Nelly.

Dolby. Ah, delightful (*bows*). What a pretty girl! What cheeks! What a shape!

Nelly. Your first visit to the country, Mr. Dolby?

Dolby. I'm ashamed to say it is, Miss Nelly. But it's delightful; such a quantity of trees and grass; houses not quite so plenty.

Charles. Mr. Dolby would like a glass of milk.

Dolby. Yes, thank you; cow's milk, if the cows are at leisure.

Nelly. O, quite. I'll bring it at once. [*Exit* R.

Dolby. Charley, my boy, your sister's a perfect beauty.

Charles. Sit down, Dolby (DOLBY *brings chair up to table* L. CHARLES *brings one down from back; they sit* R. *and* L.) I had hopes that you would come down here heart-whole; but I learn that you are already engaged in a love affair.

Dolby. Don't mention it (PERSIS *opens door, steps out, and listens*). The most absurd thing; a little country-house flirtation with a lady old enough to be my mother.

Persis. The wretch!

Dolby. Unfortunately, one evening I lay upon my bed, smoking and reading, with my door open into the passage, on the farther side of which is located the room of Miss Persis Grievous. Well, I dropped off to sleep, the pipe dropped from my mouth, and I was awakened by the cry of "fire," and a brisk shaking from my female friend across the passage. I had set fire to the bed, which was easily put out; not so the flame which had been kindled in the breast of my fair but aged deliverer.

Persis. The heartless scoundrel!

Dolby. From that time she has pursued me with a relentless love. I cannot escape her.

Charles. And you are engaged?

Dolby. Not exactly. Pegoty is willing, but Barkis is not; for, Charley, I am in love with a phantom.

Charles. Then you'd better give up the ghost, and make Persis happy.

Dolby. No; I can never love but one, "Rosa Bean." Isn't that a pretty name? I'll show you her face (*hunts pockets*). Confound it, I've left her photograph under my pillow!

Persis. O, the wretch! I'll never forgive him — never — (*disappears into room* L.).

(*Enter* NELLY, R. *with glass pitcher of milk and goblet.*)

Nelly. Here's the milk, Mr. Dolby.

Dolby. O, thank you (*she fills goblet, standing behind table.* DOLBY *drinks*). Here's your best health. Ah, what milk! I haven't tasted anything like that since I was — a very little child.

Nelly. Can I bring you anything else?

Dolby. No, I'm obliged to you. By the way, is there a young lady in the neighborhood named "Rosa Bean"?

Nelly. "Bean"—"Bean"— No. There are no Beans here; there's a Rosa Higgins about half a mile from here.

Dolby. O, she won't do.

Charles. There are Rows of Beans in the garden; how will those suit, Dixie? Ha, ha, ha!

Nelly. To which I will introduce you at dinner. Good-bye till then. [*Exit* R.

Dolby. Good-bye (*rises and puts back chair to* L. CHARLES *rises*). Now, then, Charley, let's try the fish (*takes his pole and net*).

Charles. Really, Dixie, I cannot leave the house just now. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll send my man with you, and join you soon (*goes to door* C.). Here, Careless! Careless!

Carlos (*enter* C.). Yes, sir. Here I am!

Charles. Careless, show this gentleman to the fishing-pond. (*Dolby at back, busies himself with tackle.*)

Carlos. Fishing-pond! Where's that?

Charles (*aside*). Shut up, you fool! Behind the barn.

Carlos. Ho, ho, ho! that's a pretty fishing-pond! Why, there's nothin' there 'cept skeeters!

Charles. Well, they bite, don't they? You'd better take Towzer along with you, he wants exercise.

Carlos. Towzer? Why, he's not sociable with strangers.

Charles. Do as I bid you.

Carlos. All right, Mister. Come along, sir — I'll show you sport!

Dolby. That's the sort.

Carlos. What kind of fishing do you like best? Do'nt make any difference here. (*Aside*) Have to fish a darn long spell afore you get any.

Dolby. Well, s'pose we try for cod — no, I mean mackerel. Any blue-fish about here?

Carlos. Ho, ho, ho!

Charles. Careless!

Carlos. Blue-fish? Wal, no; we're out of blue-fish to-day. (*Aside*) Lord, he *is* green!

Dolby. No matter; lead me to the lake where sport the finny tribe.

Carlos. Funny what? Gosh all hemlock! thought you was going a fishing!

Dolby. O, come along, it's getting late. Good-bye, Charley. Don't forget I must see your wife.

[*Exit* C.

Carlos. Say, Mister, who's agoin' to dig the bait, say? [*Exit* C.

Charles. Still harping on my wife. I'll know the meaning of this ere I am an hour older.

(*Enter* PERSIS *from door* L.)

Persis. At last he is gone, and we may arrange our plans.

Bobstay (*opens door* R.). Ahoy, Charley! (PERSIS *screams, and runs into room* L. *Enter* BOBSTAY.) Aha! a woman! Who is it? (*Creeps across stage on tiptoe, and peeps into keyhole, door* L.)

Charles (*seizes him by arm and whirls him to* R.). What are you about, captain? There's a lady in that room.

Bobstay. I must have a peep at her (*runs up and looks into keyhole*). Ah, ha! 'tis she! (*falls back into* CHARLES'S *arms*).

Charles. She! Who?

Bobstay (*recovering himself*). Hush! Spanker's wife! My widow, you know! Our evil genius! It's a judgment on me for giving up the search for the lost Spanker. I must be off. Good-bye; put it there (*they shake hands*). If I'm asked for, you know — mysteriously disappeared — (*goes up to door* C.).

Mrs. C. (*outside* C.) Charley! Charley!

Bobstay (*comes down* R.). There's a craft bearing down this way; mum's the word, Charley.

[*Exit door* R.

(*Enter* PERSIS *from room* L.)

Persis. Shall we never be alone?

Charles. Hush! go back; my wife is here!

Persis. Your wife? Rosa Bean? I'll scratch her eyes out!

Charles (*pushing her into room*). No, no; you'll spoil all. They meet! — 'twould never do (*locks door and takes out key.* MRS. C. *appears at door* C.)

Mrs. C. Why, Charles, what are you doing? Locking my door?

Charles (*confused*). Yes — no — that is, I was afraid the cat would get in there, and so I locked it.

Mrs. C. I want to put my things away.

Charles. I wouldn't take them off now, it's a little chilly here.

Mrs. C. Chilly! Why, Charles, are you ill? How pale you look! If it were anybody else, I should say a guilty look was on your face.

Charles (*aside*). A guilty look! and she in clandestine correspondence with Dolby! (*Aloud*) Guilty? absurd! (*Aside*) What have I done? Locked a woman in her room, — and I suspect her? O, here's a muddle!

Mrs. C. Well, as you do not seem inclined to let me into my room, I will lay off my things in Nelly's (*goes to door* R.). Why, this is locked too!

Charles. O, yes, yes; I forgot to tell you. I — I locked up the dog in there.

Mrs. C. The dog Towzer! What for?

Charles. Well, I was just going to sit down to read, and I didn't want to be disturbed.

Dog outside. "Bow, wow, wow!"

Mrs. C. Ah, Towzer seems to have found the way out.

Charles. I wish I could. (*Dog barks.*)

Dolby (*outside*). Help! murder! help! (*Comes tumbling in through the window on to lounge; rolls on to floor.*) Confound that dog! (*gets up rubbing his knees.*)

Charles. What luck, Dolby. Did you get a bite?

Dolby. Yes; two of them; and if my legs hadn't done good service, that confounded dog would have made a meal of me (*still rubbing his knees, not looking up.* Mrs. Cleverly, *down* R.).

Charles. Sorry, Dolby, you didn't have better luck. (*Aside*) Now to test my wife (*steps* C.). Allow me to

present you to my wife. Mrs. Cleverly, my friend Dixon Dolby. Dixie, this is the lady you have longed to meet.

Dolby (*comes down* L.; *looks across*). Rosa Bean! Good gracious!

Charles. No, no. My poor friend, you are growing crazy with your absurd phantom, Rosa Bean.

Dolby. Good gracious, it's her! And I — I — unhappy wretch! — am in love with Charley's wife! What will become of me? I shall be found out (*wipes face with handkerchief*).

Mrs. C. I hope you are enjoying your day's sport, Mr. Dolby.

Dolby. O, immensely! You see we took the dog along for a photograph — no, for company. Don Carlos said we'd better; and he got interested in my arrangements; and just as I stooped over to put on a bait, somebody said, "St' boy!" and I suppose he mistook me for the boy, — at any rate, took a bite. Then it suddenly occurred to me that there was "no place like home."

(*Enter* CARLOS, C.)

Carlos. Say, Mister, what did you want to scoot for jist as it was gettin' interesting?

Dolby. Interesting, Don Carlos? It was getting exciting! (*Aside*) Heavens! how shall I get out of this scrape? — Charley's wife! — He'll murder me! (*Aloud*) Charley, I really believe I'll take the next train.

Charles. Nonsense. You've not tried the gunning yet. Finish your day's sport.

Dolby (*aside*). I wish I could, at once.

Charles. Careless will take you to the game.

Dolby (*takes gun*). All right. Don Carlos, we'll try the game; (*aside*) and I'm off to the train. No more of this sport for me, thank you.

Carlos. Say, what do you want to shoot?

Dolby. How 's the deer?

Carlos. Deer? Ho, ho, ho! They're purty well; but we're out on 'em jist now.

Dolby. Well, a buffalo or two.

Carlos. Ho, ho, ho!

Dolby. Hang it! don't stand there grinning; let's shoot something quick. [*Exit* C. *and off* L.

Carlos (*aside*). Darned if I don't take him down into Buffalo Bill's paster. He'll shoot the fence quicker than scat. [*Exit* C.

Mrs. C. Now that the dog is out of the way, I suppose you can have no objection to —

Charles. By the way, Jenny, I'd nearly forgotten it; but Mrs. Jenks, our neighbor, was here just now, and her baby 's taken sick — awful; wants you. It's got a sudden attack of squills, I think she said.

Mrs. C. Indeed! I'll run over at once; that is, if you can spare me.

Charles. O, certainly — that is, no — yes. They're not catching, are they?

Mrs. C. I think not. Good-bye (*goes up* C.). (*Aside*) There's something wrong with Charley. I'll not go far. [*Exit* C.

Charles. Now to get that confounded Bobstay out of the way (*goes towards door* R.).

(*Enter* NELLY, R. 1 E.)

Nelly. Charley, what do you want in my room?

Charles. O, nothing — that is — I was looking for you.

Nelly. And having found me —

Charles. I want you to advise me. Read that. (*Gives note.*)

Nelly (*aside*). Nobody can do it better than I (*reads*). Well, Charley?

Charles. Well, Charley. No, ill Charley; a decidedly badly-used Charley. Do you know that photograph?

Nelly. It's our Jenny.

Charles. Our Jenny! And it's sent to my friend Dolby! I'll murder him!

Nelly. Now, Charley, don't be jealous. I've no doubt Jenny will explain matters to your entire satisfaction. (PERSIS *knocks at door* L.) Ah, who's that?

Charles (*moving to door* L.). It's the cat. Scat, pussy, pussy, pussy!

Nelly, R. (*changes photograph in note for another*). I'll see if we cannot put a new face upon the matter. (*Aloud*) Here's your note, Charley. Don't be jealous; it doesn't look well in a man at all. [*Exit* R.

Charles. Now to let the captain out. (*Goes to door* R.; *raps*). I say, captain — coast clear!

(*Enter* BOBSTAY, *with a calico skirt pinned about his waist, a red shawl over his shoulders, and a straw bonnet on his head*)

Gracious! what's the meaning of that rig?

Bobstay. Disguise; run the gantlet; slip my cable.

See, I'm here — I'm gone. If anybody asks for Bobstay, you know — mysteriously disappeared. [*Goes to door* C.

(*Enter* MRS. CLEVERLY, C.)

Mrs. C. One moment, if you please.

Bobstay (*aside*). Shiver my timbers, it's Jenny!

Charles. She's found him out!

Mrs. C. (*leading* BOBSTAY *down* R. *by arm*). I have no objections to my husband's entertaining ladies in my absence; but I have decided objections to their leaving my house with property not their own. I'll thank you for that shawl.

Bobstay. Ay, ay. (*Takes off shawl.*)

Mrs. C. And that bonnet.

Bobstay (*takes off bonnet*). Ay, ay.

Mrs. C. Captain Bobstay! Uncle Boliver!

(*Enter* Miss PERSIS, *door* L.)

Persis. Captain Bobstay! My husband! (*Shrieks, and falls into* CHARLES'S *arms.*)

Bobstay. 'Tis she; support me, Jenny (*falls into* MRS. C.'s *arms*).

(*Report of gun outside* C.)

Dolby. Help! murder! help! (*Runs in through door* C., *turns and shuts door; puts his back against it.*) Hallo! what's the matter here?

Mrs. C. So, sir, you have deceived me. And this lady is —

Charles. Your aunt, Mrs. Captain Bobstay.

Bobstay. 'Tis false!

Persis. Boliver! my own — (*approaching him.*)

Bobstay. No, nothing of the kind, madam. You married me and I married you under a mistake. When

you can bring me convincing proof of the death of your husband Spanker, — a leg or an arm of the aforesaid will be sufficient proof, — I am ready to talk business. Till then, madam, I am free.

Persis. Boliver —

Bobstay. O, I shall boil over if you are not silent (*sits at table* R., *takes up paper; reads.* MISS PERSIS *moves about him, trying to get sight of his face; he keeps the paper before him*).

Charles. Now, Mrs. Cleverly, having cleared myself to your satisfaction, I hope — (*sees* DOLBY) Hallo! Dolby, what are you doing there?

Dolby. Fact is, Charley, I've shot something!

(CARLOS *sticks his head into window.*)

Carlos. Yes, darn you, you shot a calf! But Buffalo Bill, our black bull, tossed you over the fence in no time. Ho, ho, ho! You're a sportsman, you are!

[*Exit* C.

Dolby. Charley, I guess I'll go home. I've lost my net, my rod, and my gun; and if your game are as active as your friend Buffalo William, I'd rather not be hunting, thank you.

Charles. Do you recognize that note, Dolby? (*Gives note.*)

Dolby. O, Lord, it's! coming! Here's a pretty day's sport! That note? O, yes. That note is —

Charles. From my wife, I believe.

Dolby. O, heavens, it's all over! Charley, 'pon my word, I hadn't the least idea that Rosa Bean was your wife. If I had —

Charles. Silence! (*Snatches note from* DOLBY,

and runs to c.) And you, madam, what have you to say to it? (*Gives note to* MRS. C.)

(*Enter* NELLY, c.)

Mrs. C. (*looking at it.*) Say! What can I say? This in no way concerns me.

Charles. Indeed! And the picture?

Mrs. C. O, the picture. (*Looks at it.*) Why, it's our Nelly.

Charles and Dolby. Our Nelly!

Nelly. Yes, our Nelly — who is answerable for all this mischief. She is the writer of the note — the unknown correspondent of our friend Mr. Dixon Dolby, Rosa Bean.

Dolby. Well, that's clever (*runs up to her*, c.). How do you do (*shakes hands*). (*They go to lounge and sit talking.*)

Mrs C. And you suspected me, Charley!

Charles. What could I do? Your aunt Bobstay brought me your picture, which somehow has mysteriously disappeared.

Bobstay (*jumping up*). "Mysteriously disappeared." Hark! listen! (*reads.*) "All friends of the supposed-to-be-drowned Sylvester Spanker, especially his widow, are hereby notified that he has returned to his ship, the Venetian Red, and will sail this day for Valparaiso." Ha, ha! ho, ho! He's found, and I am free! Widow, I congratulate you.

Persis. Spanker alive! Thank fortune, I am no longer dependent on the cold charities of the world!

Bobstay. Madam, put it there (*they shake hands*). We'll go aboard the Venetian Red this very day. I'll

return property, and take my receipt, tear up our certificate, give you my blessing, and mysteriously disappear.

Dolby (*comes down with* NELLY). But what's to become of me? Will you desert the life you saved? Persis —

Persis. Bother! You'd better be silent. I was in that room when you told the story with such complimentary allusions to me.

Dolby. Ahem! Mum's the word.

Charles. Come, Nelly, let's have dinner. (*Exit* NELLY L.) This little muddle is happily ended.

Dolby. I've had my day's sport; not just what I expected, but it's ending happily.

Charles. The widow has found her husband.

Bobstay. For which we return thanks.

(CARLOS *sticks his head in window.*)

Carlos. Say, you'll never see that calf again; she's gin her last blat.

(*Enter* NELLY, R.)

Nelly. Dinner's ready.

Charles (*gives his wife his arm*, C.). Come, let's to dinner. (DOLBY *and* NELLY *arm in arm*, R.; CAPTAIN *and* MISS PERSIS *arm in arm*, L.) Are you ready, captain?

Bobstay. Ay, ay, Charley, with a rousing appetite. So heave ahead; we'll follow in your wake. I'm happy. You are happy, widow. Yes, we're all happy — for we've had a day's sport, and all our troubles have — mysteriously disappeared.

[*Curtain.*]

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